Bauer 2000-0022

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for handling telecommunications calls comprising the steps of:

in response to a request from a calling party, establishing a special services connection to a called number;

determining whether said connection is established to a LIICA entity;

when said step of determining concludes that said connection is established to a LIICA entity, presenting said calling party an offer to store a message on a messaging platform.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of offering comprises:

providing a prompt to said calling party that solicits a response from said calling party regarding whether said calling party wishes to store a message,

coupling said calling party to said messaging platform when said response is affirmative, and

storing a message from said calling party in said messaging platform.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said step of offering comprises:

coupling said calling party to said messaging platform,

providing a prompt to said calling party that solicits a response from said calling party regarding whether said calling party wishes to store a message, and

when said response is affirmative, storing a message from said calling party in said messaging platform.

4. The method of claim 1 where said LIICA entity is any entity other than a communicative person.

5. The method of claim 1 where said LIICA entity is taken from a set that includes a telephone answering machine, a fax machine, and a modem.

2

Bauer 2000-0022

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of storing a message on said messaging platform in response to acceptance by said calling party of said offer.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising a step of providing a message to said LIICA entity.

8. The method of claim 7 where said provided message is stored in said LIICA entity.

9. The method of claim 7 where said message provided to said LIICA entity identifies the calling party.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 where said message provided to said LIICA entity characterizes the message stored from said calling party in said messaging platform.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10 where said message provided to said LIICA entity informs that said messaging platform has a message that requires a party that retrieves said message stored in said messaging platform to agree to pay a fee.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

preceding the step of establishing a connection to a called number, receiving a request for a connection from said calling party.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of:

preceding the step of establishing a connection to a called number, receiving a request for a connection from said calling party; and

interacting with said calling party to establish that said calling party wishes to receive a call treatment that might lead to an offer, made to said calling party, to store a message in said messaging platform.

3

Bauer 2000-0022

14. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

preceding the step of establishing a special-services connection to a called number, receiving a request for a connection from said calling party.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

interacting with said calling party to enable the establishment of said connection.

16. The method of claim 15 where said special-services connection is a collect-call connection, and said step of interacting includes said calling party identifying itself.

17. The method of claim 15 where said step of interacting includes providing an offer to said calling party to store a message in said messaging platform.

18. The method of claim 17 where said step of interacting further includes storing a message from said calling party in said messaging platform.

19. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from an inquiring party to retrieve stored messages,

ascertaining identity of said inquiring party,

when said step of ascertaining identifies that messages are present in said message platform for said inquiring party, retrieving a stored message from said messaging platform.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from an inquiring party to retrieve stored messages,

ascertaining identity of said inquiring party,

ascertaining willingness of said inquiring party to pay for retrieval of a stored message, and

4

Bauer 2000-0022

when said step of ascertaining willingness concludes that said inquiring party agreed to pay for delivery of a message, retrieving a stored message from said messaging platform.

Delete claim **21.**

5